



Manchester-by-the-Sea Meeting Minutes

Board/Committee: Open Space & Recreation Committee
Day & Date: Monday, October 21, 2024
Time: 4:00 PM
Location: Room 7 and Zoom
Signature: Sue Croft
Attendees: Steve Gang, Helen Bethell, Patti Mitchell, Nick de Sherbinin, Terry Cowman, Morgan Evans, Marc Resnick, Shannon Bianchi, Sue Croft

MINUTES

- Welcome/Announcements – Steve Gang called the meeting to order and welcomed attendees. There were no announcements.
- Western Woods – Steve gave a brief update on a situation with a property owner in the Western Woods who gave permission to a hunter to use her land. Although it proved challenging to enforce (as hunting is not allowed), the situation seems to be resolved. There was discussion about rerouting a trail off Walker Rd to allow access to this portion of the Western Woods to avoid this person’s property. Steve said he would investigate it.
- Gordon Woods – The documentation prepared by Helen is ready for distribution. So far Helen has only shared it with MECT. It was discussed that the package first be circulated to all Town boards and committees. Helen suggested that she and Steve work together to approach boards/committees to review/discuss/present. Steve mentioned having recently met with an Environmental Science professor at Gordon College. This person seemed interested in being a voice in the Gordon College community to bring more focus to the conservation of this land.
- Parking/Easement at Newport Park – Sue Croft confirmed that the survey has been completed and the easement language is being worked on by KP Law. Marc Resnick noted that tomorrow 10/22 at 11:30 there will be a meeting at the site of the parking spaces that will include DPW, ConCom, Marc and MHA. The purpose will be to look at the trees that will need to come down to create the parking spaces, determine how many spaces will be created and any impact on the nearby vernal pool. He also mentioned that the MHT plans to complete a survey of the area including buffer zones and wetlands. These survey results will set the stage for a formal plan for the expansion of Newport Park. Steve read a list of questions that came up during a

previous MHA meeting that Steve attended to address the possibility of a guided walk in Powder House for Newport Park and Plains residents.

- New Trailhead Signage – Nick de Sherbinin gave the group a presentation he created to outline preliminary plans to add trailhead signage at Town-owned conservation areas. That presentation can be found [HERE](#). After the presentation there was a discussion that included:
 - Focus on Town-owned properties for adding signage
 - Consistency with signage/establish a standard
 - Start with trails that can be seen from the street (ex: three entrances to Powder House from Pine St alone)
 - Consider a fundraiser to purchase the signs
 - Importance of using materials that will last
- DeNormandie Project Update – A brief history of the land and the conservation project was given. The project will be before the Town for vote at STM in Nov. The CPC as well as many other boards have already approved moving forward with the project. Steve also noted that this project has allowed the CPC to shift gears from funding smaller projects to a focus on larger land conservation efforts. Nick de Sherbinin mentioned that there will be a tour of the DeNormandie property hosted by Essex County Greenbelt on Wednesday 10/23. A link to the project website can be found [HERE](#).
- Other Opportunities for Land Conservation – the DeNormandie project is the current effort with regards to land conservation. No additional suggestions were made at the time.
- Comprehensive Map of All Conservation Land in Manchester – Helen gave a brief history of her efforts over recent years to provide a comprehensive list of all Chapter 97 protected lands in Town. There was discussion that a comprehensive map may already exist and could possibly be found in the Town’s Master Plan.
- The meeting minutes from the 9/16 meeting were unanimously approved.
- Next meeting will be scheduled for Monday 12/2 at 4:00 PM.
- Steve provided an update regarding the SLV 40B project saying that a preliminary order has been granted by the state overturning the ZBA decision to deny this project. Lawyers on both sides are reviewing this initial decision currently. It is unclear what the next steps will be at this point.
- Marc introduced Shannon Bianchi, the new Land Clerk who will be working with him. Shannon gave attendees a brief background of himself.
- The meeting was adjourned at 5:16 PM.